

**What is claimed is:**

1       1. A method comprising:

2                 receiving on a first switching device a message from  
3                 a second switching device that indicates to slow packet  
4                 transmission to the second switching device.

1       2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

2                 slowing packet transmission from the first switching  
3                 device to a congested port in the second switching  
4                 device.

1       3. The method of claim 1 wherein the message identifies a  
2                 congested port in the second switching device.

1       4. The method of claim 1 wherein the message identifies a  
2                 port in the first switching device transmitting packets to a  
3                 congested port in the second switching device.

1       5. A method comprising:

2                 transmitting from a first switching device to a  
3                 second switching device a message that indicates to slow  
4                 packet transmission to the first switching device.

1       6. The method of claim 5 further comprising:

2                 transmitting the message from the second switching  
3                 device to a third switching device.

1       7. The method of claim 5 wherein the first switching device  
2 includes an application-specific integrated circuit.

1       8. A computer program product, tangibly embodied in an  
2 information carrier, the computer program product being  
3 operable to cause a machine to:

4                  receive on a first switching device a message from a  
5 second switching device that indicates to slow packet  
6 transmission to the second switching device.

1       9. The computer program product of claim 8 being further  
2 operable to cause a machine to:

3                  slow packet transmission from the first switching  
4 device to a congested port in the second switching  
5 device.

1       10. The computer program product of claim 8 being further  
2 operable to cause a machine wherein the message identifies a  
3 congested port in the second switching device.

1       11. The computer program product of claim 8 wherein the  
2 message identifies a port in the first switching device  
3 transmitting packets to a congested port in the second  
4 switching device.

1       12. A computer program product, tangibly embodied in an  
2 information carrier, the computer program product being  
3 operable to cause a machine to:

4                 transmit from a first switching device to a second  
5 switching device a message that indicates to slow packet  
6 transmission to the first switching device.

1       13. The computer program product of claim 12 being further  
2 operable to cause a machine to:

3                 transmit the message from the second switching  
4 device to a third switching device.

1       14. The computer program product of claim 12 wherein the  
2 first switching device includes an application-specific  
3 integrated circuit.

1       15. A message manager comprises:

2                 a process to receive on a first switching device a  
3 message from a second switching device that indicates to  
4 slow packet transmission to the second switching device.

1       16. The message manager of claim 15 further comprising:

2                 a process to transmit from the first switching  
3 device to the second switching device a message that  
4 indicates to slow packet transmission to the first  
5 switching device.

1       17. The message manager of claim 15 wherein the message  
2 identifies a congested port in the second switching device.

1       18. A system comprising:  
2                     a first switching device capable of,  
3                             receiving a message from a second switching  
4                             device that indicates to slow packet transmission to  
5                             the second switching device.

1       19. The system of claim 18 wherein the first switching device  
2 is further capable of:  
3                     transmitting to the second switching device a  
4                             message that indicates to slow packet transmission to the  
5                             first switching device.

1       20. The system of claim 18 wherein the message identifies a  
2 congested port in the second switching device.

1       21. A packet forwarding device comprising:  
2                     an input port for receiving a packet;  
3                     an output port for delivering the received packet;  
4                     and  
5                     a first switching device capable of,  
6                             receiving a message from a second switching  
7                             device that indicates to slow packet transmission to  
8                             the second switching device.

1       22. The packet forwarding device of claim 21 wherein the  
2       first switching device is further capable of:

3                 transmitting to the second switching device a  
4                 message that indicates to slow packet transmission to the  
5                 first switching device.

1       23. The packet forwarding device of claim 21 wherein the  
2       message identifies a congested port in the second switching  
3       device.

1       24. A network switch comprising:

2                 a first application-specific integrated circuit  
3                 (ASIC) capable of receiving a message from a second ASIC  
4                 that indicates to slow packet transmission to the second  
5                 ASIC.

1       25. The network switch of claim 24 wherein the first ASIC is  
2       capable of transmitting to the ASIC a message that indicates  
3       to slow packet transmission to the first ASIC.

1       26. The network switch of claim 24 wherein the message  
2       identifies a congested port in the second ASIC.